



Basic Surgical Skills

15 Years of Building Local Surgical Capacity in Palestine



Palestine | September 2026

About This Report

This report marks fifteen years of the Basic Surgical Skills (BSS) Program in Palestine.

The report traces the program's evolution, from an internationally mentored pilot to a nationally mandated requirement for every general surgery resident in Palestine, now led and delivered by Palestinian faculty. It reflects on how sustained partnerships, faculty development, and national leadership have contributed to creating a sustainable model for surgical skills training. It also highlights the program's wider legacy: demonstrating how investment in education can strengthen national capacity even in a complex and resource-constrained environment.

Acknowledgments

Juzoor for Health and Social Development extends its deepest gratitude to the institutions, donors, partners, national and international faculty members, instructors, coordinators, trainees, and supporters whose vision, dedication, and collaboration have made the Basic Surgical Skills (BSS) Program a lasting success over the past 15 years.

We are especially grateful to the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for its academic leadership and enduring commitment to the BSS Program, and to the Palestinian Medical Council, Augusta Victoria Hospital, the Palestinian Surgeons' Society, Al-Ahli Hospital (Gaza and Hebron), An-Najah National University and National Hospital, Nobel Medical Supplies Company, and UNRWA for their invaluable expertise and collaboration in establishing, institutionalizing, and sustaining the program in Palestine.

Special thanks are extended to the late Dr. Tawfiq Nasser, former Director of Augusta Victoria Hospital, whose valued contributions and legacy remain deeply appreciated; Dr. Robin Kincaid, International Faculty; Ms. Dina Nasser, Juzoor Coordinator; Ms. Sarah Sholl, International Surgical Coordinator; and Ms. Claire Falconer, Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh Course Coordinator, for their important roles in initiating, coordinating, and supporting the program over the years.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to Dr. Ruth Mckee for providing technical guidance to the Surgical Section of the Palestinian Medical Council (PMC) on the development of the national surgical curriculum. Her recommendations included incorporating Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), work-based assessments, structured rotation of training posts, and other important elements aimed at strengthening postgraduate surgical education in Palestine.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and all other funding partners whose contributions have enabled the program's expansion and sustainability.

About Juzoor

Juzoor for Health and Social Development is a Palestinian non-governmental organization working at the national level to improve the health and well-being of Palestinian families and promote health as a basic human right.

Founded in 1996 by a team of health and development professionals, the organization was named Juzoor (“roots” in Arabic) to reflect its focus on the underlying socioeconomic determinants of health and well-being. The name also reflects Juzoor’s commitment to continuing its work in Palestinian communities despite the challenging political context, as well as the founders’ experience in their respective fields and in establishing some of Palestine’s leading grassroots health organizations. Juzoor addresses critical public health challenges by linking prevention, education, and intervention to strengthen health systems and improve population health.

As part of its commitment to health systems strengthening, Juzoor has made continuing professional development (CPD) a cornerstone of its work, designing and implementing accredited training programs that enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of healthcare professionals across Palestine. The Basic Surgical Skills (BSS) Program is one of Juzoor’s flagship CPD initiatives, reflecting the organization’s long-standing commitment to partnering with national and international institutions to strengthen the health workforce, build local surgical capacity, and advance surgical education in Palestine.



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Glossary of Abbreviations & Acronyms

AVH	Augusta Victoria Hospital
BSS	Basic Surgical Skills
NOTSS	Non-Technical Skills for Surgeons
PMC	Palestinian Medical Council
RCSEd	Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency

The Need for Basic Surgical Skills Training

Safe surgical practice begins with mastering the basics. Before undertaking complex procedures, surgical residents must develop confidence and proficiency in fundamental techniques such as knot-tying, suturing, hemostasis, and safe tissue handling. Clinical experience remains central to this learning process, with residents progressively learning by observing, assisting, and performing procedures under the supervision of experienced surgeons in emergency departments, hospital wards, and operating theaters.

Basic Surgical Skills Courses (BSSC) were developed by the UK and Irish colleges of surgeons as a result of the Calman report (1993) on surgical training, which recommended an increased emphasis on training in a simulated environment. The BSSC focuses on key technical skills, through demonstration, supervised practice, observation, and constructive feedback; trainees can develop sound techniques and identify and correct poor habits in a controlled learning environment. By providing a standardized approach to fundamental surgical skills, BSSC also establishes a common benchmark against which trainee performance can be assessed. The training provides an important foundation, while continued practice and supervised clinical experience remain essential to developing competence over time.

The importance of these skills is particularly evident in settings where patients cannot always be transferred promptly to higher-level care. In Palestine, longstanding movement restrictions have made timely referral to specialist services more difficult, increasing reliance on junior surgeons in district and peripheral hospitals to manage surgical emergencies while patients await transfer. In such circumstances, a sound grasp of basic surgical skills is not merely foundational; it can be lifesaving.

A reflection from the early years

"An enduring image from the trip was of ambulances waiting in long lines of vehicles at checkpoints. Clearly patient transfer from peripheral hospitals to specialized care takes a long time in the West Bank. The junior surgeon's grasp of basic surgical skills (e.g. tie off a vessel, join bowel safely etc), therefore becomes crucial for patient survival".

Source: Magdalena Ionescu (Kincaid), [Surgical Training in Palestine](#), BMJ Blogs, June 2, 2011

Today, the need for BSS remains undiminished. Movement restrictions in the occupied West Bank have increased substantially. As of December 2025, 925 movement obstacles, including checkpoints, road gates, and earth mounds, have been documented, restricting the movement of over 3.4 million Palestinians ([UN, 2026](#)). Meanwhile, more than 2 million Palestinians in Gaza are living amid the widespread destruction of the healthcare system, even as the demand for emergency and trauma surgery continues to be high ([WHO, 2026](#)). Significant challenges thus continue to impede timely access to specialist surgical care, reinforcing the importance of equipping junior surgeons with the competencies needed to safely manage surgical emergencies while patients await referral or transfer.

The BSS Journey: From an Idea to a National Program

From Need to Action: Establishing the Basic Surgical Skills Program

The idea for the BSS course in Palestine emerged following a visit by UK surgeons Magdalena Ionescu (Kincaid) and Robin Kincaid to the West Bank in 2009. Witnessing the challenges facing surgical care, they proposed introducing BSS—already regarded as an essential component of early surgical training in the United Kingdom—to Palestinian surgical trainees. The idea was subsequently developed through discussions with Juzoor for Health and Social Development, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Palestinian surgical leaders, and international partners, forming the basis of a collaborative initiative to introduce BSS training in Palestine. The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd) formally endorsed the course in September 2010, and the partners worked together to prepare for its first delivery in May 2011.

Hosted at the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) in East Jerusalem, the course brought together 19 participants from hospitals across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. An international faculty accredited by the RCSEd delivered structured, simulation-based training aligned with internationally recognized standards of technical skills education. Across 16 practical skills stations, participants practiced fundamental operative techniques through structured teaching and assessment.

“The BSS course taught me that surgical excellence begins with mastering the basics. The course provided a combination of hands-on practice, expert instructors, and constructive feedback which made it an unforgettable learning experience.”

— Dr. Fatma K. A. Khatib, Medical Doctor, Saint Luke's Hospital, Nablus

“The BSS course significantly increased my confidence in performing the fundamental steps of surgery. The hands-on training approach made the learning experience practical, effective, and directly applicable to clinical practice”

— Dr. Yara Deeb Najajreh, General Surgeon, Hebron Governmental Hospital

Following its introduction in 2011, the three-day BSS course was delivered annually at AVH in East Jerusalem through 2015. During these early years, BSS was established and expanded through collaboration among Palestinian and international partners, who brought together their expertise, resources, and shared commitment to the success of the initiative (see *Partnership in Practice*). This collaboration provided a consistent foundation for the delivery of BSS training, despite the challenging operating environment, while building a growing group of Palestinian surgeons with experience as both participants and instructors.

From Course to National Program: The Evolution of BSS

Surgical Education: The year 2015 marked an important turning point for the program. As part of broader efforts to strengthen and standardize postgraduate surgical education in Palestine, the Palestinian Medical Council (PMC), with the support of Juzoor, adopted BSS as a mandatory component of surgical residency training. The 2015 training syllabus established the accredited BSS course as a compulsory component of the early years of residency, with successful completion required for entry to the Palestinian Surgical Board examination.

As BSS became embedded within the national training system, Juzoor subsequently relocated course delivery to its Training Center in Ramallah, assumed responsibility for program organization and logistics, and established a sustainable operational model capable of meeting the growing demand for training for first- and second-year general surgery residents from Ministry of Health and non-governmental hospitals.

The Palestinian General Surgery Residency Program Training Syllabus of January 2015 describes the BSS curriculum as covering:

Safe surgery: Principles of sterility and microbiology.

Preparation: Hand washing, gloving, gowning and preparation of a sterile field

Local anaesthesia: Principles and administration of local anaesthesia

Wound management: Surgical wounds, skin incision and closure.

Core techniques: Knot tying, haemostasis and tissue handling

Operative skills: Tissue retraction, use of

“Witnessing the rapid transformation in a trainee’s dexterity and technical confidence over the course of just a few days is incredibly rewarding. Investing in these foundational skills is the single most effective way to build a resilient, highly capable generation of surgeons for our healthcare system.”

– Dr. Ahmad Abdelhaq, General & Laparoscopic Surgeon; BSS Instructor, Istishari Arab Hospital



Today, Juzoor is the only accredited center for delivery of the BSS course in Palestine, giving it a distinctive national role in maintaining access to internationally accredited BSS training. The PMC’s role continued beyond formal adoption of BSS, coordinating with residency training hospitals to identify and nominate eligible residents and helping ensure that trainees complete the course at the appropriate stage of their residency.

Table 1: Partnership in Practice

PARTNER	ROLE IN BSS JOURNEY
Al-Ahli Hospital (Gaza and Hebron)	Partnered to facilitate local course delivery in Gaza in 2019 and 2022, and in Hebron in 2022, helping maintain access to standardized training despite movement restrictions.
An-Najah National University and An-Najah National Hospital	Supported the BSS program through faculty engagement and participation in the delivery of surgical education and training in Nablus.
Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH)	Hosted the early BSS courses in East Jerusalem from 2011, providing the facilities and training environment for course delivery and early Palestinian faculty development.
Juzoor for Health and Social Development	Engaged in program coordination from the early years; later assumed responsibility for organization and delivery. Today, Juzoor serves as the only accredited center for BSS delivery in Palestine.
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and other funding partners	Provides financial support that enables continuity and expansion.
Ministry of Health	Supported the integration and delivery of BSS within national health workforce development, with the General Directorate of Human Resources Development supporting practical skills development and follow-up.
Nobel Medical Supplies Company	Supports BSS course delivery, including educational input on suture materials and their appropriate use. In the program's early years, the company also provided surgical training kits and consumables.
Palestinian Medical Council (PMC)	Institutionalized BSS within the national general surgery residency pathway, making successful completion a requirement within residency training, and coordinates with accredited training hospitals to identify and nominate eligible residents.
Palestinian Surgeons' Society	Supports engagement with the Palestinian surgical community and the participation of Palestinian surgeons in BSS training and course delivery.
Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd)	Endorsed BSS in Palestine and provided academic leadership, technical expertise and international faculty support, and mentorship for Palestinian instructor development.
UNRWA	Supported the establishment and early implementation of BSS, including needs validation, coordination, and logistical support for course delivery.

PARTNER	ROLE IN BSS JOURNEY
At the heart of these partnerships were <u>international and Palestinian surgeons</u> who contributed their time as faculty, mentors, and trainers, building professional relationships across successive cohorts of BSS participants and instructors.	

Building Palestinian Faculty: From the outset, BSS was designed not only to train surgical residents, but also to develop Palestinian surgeons capable of teaching future cohorts. The first Palestinian instructors, including two from Gaza, were trained in 2012 by international faculty accredited by the RCSEd. Experienced Palestinian surgeons with the potential to become future trainers participated in the program and subsequently taught under supervision, receiving mentorship and assessment before progressing to certification as BSS instructors. This approach created a gradual transfer of responsibility. As the Palestinian faculty grew in experience and confidence, local surgeons assumed an increasing share of course delivery while international faculty moved progressively towards mentorship and quality assurance. By 2014, contemporary accounts were already describing this transition as a process of “*handing over the baton*”, with Palestinian surgeons increasingly leading the practical teaching sessions, marking an important step in locally led course delivery and UK faculty retaining mainly supervisory capacity. In 2015 the first course delivered completely by Palestinian faculty, mentored by a UK team, took place, followed in 2018 by the first ‘solo’ course by the Palestinian faculty and a year later, Palestinian and international faculty delivered the first RCSEd / Juzoor course at Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza.

Instructor development continued over subsequent years, expanding the pool of Palestinian surgeons qualified to plan, organize, and deliver BSS according to internationally recognized standards. In 2026, a BSS Trainers Preparation Course qualified five new trainers, bringing the latest reported total to 19 accredited BSS instructors in Palestine, four of whom are women, capable of independently planning, organizing, and delivering the course according to international standards. The program also has a certified Surgical Coordinator supporting course coordination and delivery. This progressive transfer of knowledge, skills, and educational leadership from international experts to Palestinian faculty has helped retain surgical teaching expertise within Palestine and created a sustainable national platform through which successive generations of residents can be trained.

The longer-term impact of this approach can be seen in surgeons who first experienced BSS as trainees and later became educators themselves. **Dr Asmaa Ibrahim Nayfeh, General Surgeon and Assistant Professor at An-Najah National University**, reflects:

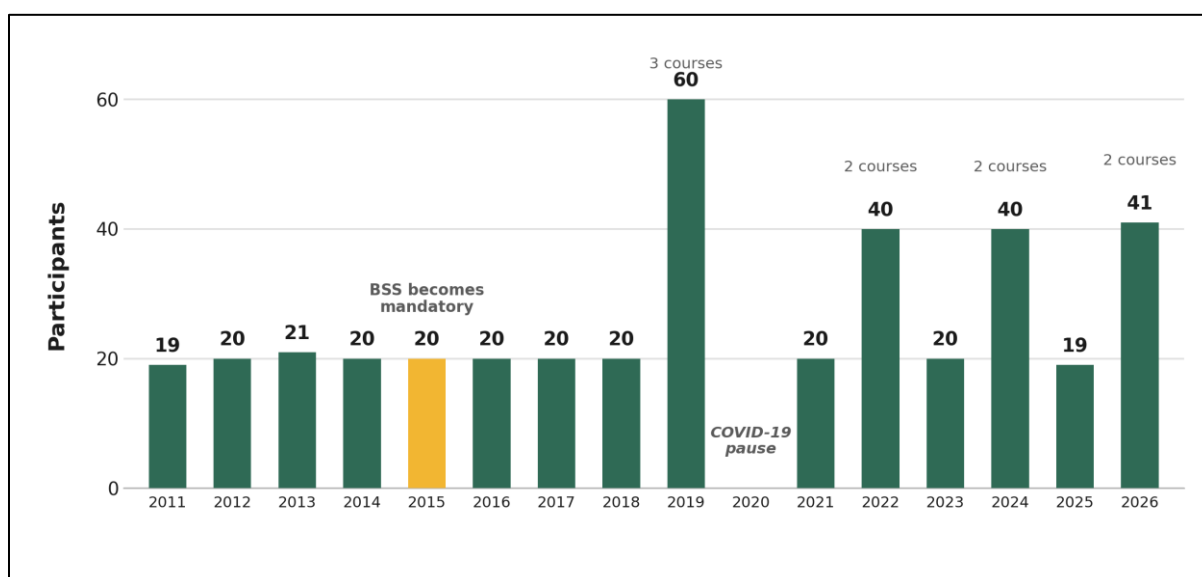
“I had the chance to take BSS as a resident in my senior years, and it impacted me personally in mastering what seemed like simple techniques. Today, every time I teach a junior in the medical journey, whether they are in surgical residency or still a student, I make sure they know the basics right. This anchors the way to do it right, so it stays with them for life.”

Expanding Program Outreach: As BSS became embedded within the national training system, its geographic reach also expanded. Courses were held in Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, and Gaza,

bringing standardized BSS training closer to surgical residents across Palestine. This expansion was also shaped by the need to respond to barriers facing surgical residents. Two surgeons from Gaza were among the first Palestinian instructors certified and remained engaged in the program. Between 2012 and 2014, five Gaza-based surgical residents participated in each annual course, maintaining access to BSS training despite growing movement restrictions. As movement between Gaza and the West Bank became increasingly restricted, the program adapted its approach. In 2019 and again in 2022, Palestinian and international faculty travelled to Gaza to deliver BSS locally in partnership with Al-Ahli Hospital, maintaining access to standardized surgical skills training despite increasing barriers to travel.

As BSS became mandatory and successive cohorts of residents required the training, demand increased. Juzoor and its partners responded by expanding course frequency, offering additional courses whenever feasible to accommodate eligible surgical residents. Demand has continued to grow, reflecting both the program's established role within residency training and wider interest from universities, hospitals, and surgical training institutions seeking greater access to structured skills training. By 2026, 20 BSS courses had been delivered, reaching 400 participants. The 2026 cohort also reflected a significant female presence, with women accounting for 40% of participants.

 20 BSS Courses delivered	 400 Participants trained	 Locations Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, Gaza	 15 Years of delivery
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Figure 1: BSS Participants Trained per Year (2011–2026)**Table 2: Key Milestones of BSS Journey**

YEAR	MILESTONE
2009	Visit to the West Bank leads to the idea of introducing BSS in Palestine
2010	RCSEd formally endorses the BSS course in Palestine
2011–2012	First BSS course held at Augusta Victoria Hospital; first Palestinian instructors trained
2011–2015	Course delivered annually in East Jerusalem
2015	Palestinian Medical Council adopts BSS as a mandatory prerequisite
2016–2019	Delivery expands to Ramallah and Nablus
2019	Three courses delivered in one year, including the first course in Gaza
2020	Only interruption in delivery, due to the COVID-19 pandemic
2021–2022	Program resumes; courses delivered in Nablus, Hebron and Gaza
2023–2026	Regular BSS delivery continues in Ramallah, with additional instructors certified
2025	Non-Technical Skills for Surgeons (NOTSS) introduced, expanding training beyond technical surgical skills

Building Non-Technical Skills: The experience of BSS also helped create a foundation for a broader approach to surgical education. As training needs evolved, Juzoor and its partners recognized that technical proficiency alone was not sufficient for safe performance in increasingly complex and high-pressure surgical environments. In response to this emerging demand, the program expanded beyond BSS to include the Non-Technical Skills for Surgeons (NOTSS) course, demonstrating the flexibility of the partnership model and its ability to respond to changing workforce needs.

NOTSS, accredited by the RCSEd, strengthens communication, teamwork, leadership, situational awareness, decision-making, and performance under pressure through scenario-based discussion and interactive exercises, recognizing the important role these non-technical skills play in patient safety and the quality of surgical care. Introduced in 2025 and led by RCSEd in collaboration with Juzoor, the PMC, and the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the most recent cycle reached 45 residents, including third- and fourth-year obstetrics and gynecology residents, and general surgery residents from Ministry of Health and non-governmental healthcare providers such as the Palestine Red Crescent Society and Al-Makassed Hospital. Together, BSS and NOTSS reflect an increasingly comprehensive and responsive approach to surgical education: developing not only what surgeons can do technically, but how they communicate, decide, lead, and work as part of a team.

“The BSS Program has been a landmark achievement for surgical training in Palestine. Despite the challenges facing our healthcare system, it has provided Palestinian surgical trainees with access to internationally recognized standards of skills training, strengthening both the quality of surgical education and the safety of patient care.”

– Dr. Khaled Demyati, Chairman, Scientific Committee for General Surgery, Palestinian Medical Council

Key Factors for Success: Lessons from Implementation

The fifteen-year journey of the BSS Program offers important lessons about how clinical education initiatives can move beyond short-term training to become sustainable components of national health workforce development. While the quality and relevance of the training provided an important foundation, the program’s continuity and growth have depended on national ownership, sustained partnerships, investment in local educators, institutional integration, responsiveness to increasing and emerging training needs, and the ability to adapt delivery in a challenging operating environment.

“The Basic Surgical Skills course provides a vital foundation for the next generation of safe, competent surgeons. Early standardization of essential technical proficiencies will elevate the quality of surgical training and patient care nationwide. I feel proud every time I witness a resident master fundamental tissue handling, suturing, and performing anastomosis.”

– Dr Abdelkarim Barqawi, Consultant General and Laparoscopic Surgeon, An-Najah National University Hospital, and Surgery Department Chair, An-Najah National University

Embedding BSS within the National Training System

The integration of BSS into the national surgical residency pathway was central to its sustainability. By making BSS a mandatory component of general surgery residency, the PMC gave the training a defined and continuing role within postgraduate surgical education. Coordination among national institutions, training hospitals, and Juzoor then helped translate this requirement into access for eligible residents. The experience demonstrates that training is more likely to endure when it is embedded within national systems rather than delivered alongside them. Aligning BSS with national training requirements and workforce structures established it as a standard and continuing component of surgical residency education, rather than an optional training opportunity.

The value of this institutionalization is also reflected at the hospital level. Dr. Fouad Nafaa, General Director of Rafidia Surgical Hospital and a general and laparoscopic colorectal surgeon, highlighted standardized surgical skills training, improved trainee competence, and the development of local surgical training capacity among the program's key achievements.

"The fact that BSS has been institutionalized in every training program gave the trainees great confidence and boost. At the same time, it increased the confidence of the consultants to trust them with more skills and operations."

– Dr. Aram Abdel-Haq, General Surgeon, Istishari Arab Hospital

Investing in Local Educators and Leadership

Developing Palestinian faculty from the program's early years proved fundamental to sustainability. Instructor development was not treated as a final handover activity, but as a long-term process of training, supervised teaching, mentorship, assessment, and progressively greater responsibility.

"Almost 20 courses later... I have witnessed not only the establishment of a strong Palestinian Faculty who delivers the BSS Course to the highest standards, but also the growing of BSS Tutor base, as young surgeons are choosing to become tutors and impart their practical skills."

– Miss Magdalena Ionescu (Kincaid), Plastic Surgeon, Kingston Hospital London; RCSEd Faculty

"The Basic Surgical Skills Course, developed by the Colleges of Surgeons in the British Isles, has become an integral part of training for Palestinian surgeons, giving them surgical skills that will be essential for the good practice of surgery. The enthusiastic practical support of Juzoor and RCSEd has developed a competent and dedicated faculty of trainers who deliver the course to the highest standards."

– David Sedgwick, Consultant Surgeon (Semi-retired); Basic Surgical Skills Course Convener, RCSEd

The experience shows that localization requires deliberate investment in people, not simply the transfer of a curriculum. Investment in a national faculty has reduced reliance on external expertise, retained teaching knowledge, educational leadership, and institutional memory within Palestine, and created a mechanism through which expertise can be passed from one generation of surgeons to the next. The benefits have also extended beyond BSS course delivery: by strengthening instructors' ability to observe performance and provide constructive feedback, faculty development has built teaching skills that can be applied in the routine clinical training of surgical residents.

Sustaining Partnerships Around a Shared Goal

BSS has been sustained through a network of partners contributing different but complementary forms of support. Academic expertise, national regulation, program coordination, clinical facilities, logistics, materials, and funding have all played a role at different stages of the program's development. These practical resources have been particularly important for sustaining hands-on training, which depends on the continued availability of appropriate equipment and consumables.

Equally important has been the sustained commitment of those who initiated the program and the Palestinian and international surgeons who have continued to volunteer their time and expertise as faculty, mentors, and trainers throughout the program's development.



The strength of this model has not simply been the number of organizations involved, but the trust built over time and the continuity, flexibility, and evolution of their roles. This long-term collaboration created an environment in which responsibility could progressively move toward Palestinian institutions while maintaining the academic standards and relationships established during the program's early years.

The value of these partnerships has also extended beyond BSS. The relationships, trust, and mechanisms for collaboration developed through the program have created a platform through which partners can identify and respond to other health workforce training needs, adapting their expertise and support to different areas of professional development.

"It has been a privilege to coordinate the BSS Program and witness its evolution from an internationally supported course into a sustainable, Palestinian-led national program. Its greatest achievement is not only the surgeons trained, but the strong local faculty, partnerships, and capacity built over the years. Seeing trainees become instructors and Palestinian leadership grow has been especially rewarding and gives us confidence that this journey will continue."

— Faten Tannous, Local Program Coordinator and Director of Training & Capacity Building, Juzoor

Adapting Delivery to Context

The program's continuity has depended on its ability to adapt to changing circumstances without compromising its core educational standards. Movement restrictions and geographic fragmentation have affected the ability of residents and faculty to travel, the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily interrupted delivery, and the growing demand for mandatory BSS required greater course frequency.

As circumstances and training needs changed, partners adapted course locations, frequency, and delivery arrangements. When increasing movement restrictions made it difficult for Gaza-based residents to access training in the West Bank, faculty travelled to Gaza to deliver BSS locally. Course frequency was increased when feasible to meet growing demand, while the partnership continued to respond to emerging educational needs. Looking ahead, faculty have identified opportunities to extend standardized BSS training across other surgical specialties.

The experience and partnerships developed through BSS have also helped pave the way for complementary training such as NOTSS, reaching both general surgery and obstetrics and gynecology residents, as well as consideration of further surgical education initiatives, including a "Surgical Boot Camp". Juzoor is currently strengthening its local faculty by facilitating the participation of four certified instructors and the Surgical Coordinator in the Provider and Instructor Courses at RCSEd in the UK. The training will certify them in the Boot Camp methodology, preparing the local faculty to support the first Palestinian Surgical Boot Camp, planned for January 2027 in collaboration with visiting international faculty.

This flexibility illustrates an important lesson from the BSS experience: sustainability in a complex environment requires not only institutional structures, but partners that can recognize changing needs and respond collectively. The capacity to adjust location, frequency, content, faculty support, and partnership arrangements while protecting educational quality has been a key ingredient in the program's resilience and continued relevance.

Looking Ahead

Building on the experience, faculty capacity, and partnerships developed through BSS, the Palestinian and international faculty group has been working to further expand the surgical training portfolio in response to evolving local needs.

One area under development is an **Essential Surgical Skills course for non-surgeons**, including paramedics, emergency physicians, and family physicians, aimed at strengthening essential surgical competencies among healthcare professionals who may be required to respond to surgical needs outside specialist surgical practice. A second area is the development of a holistic induction course for surgical residents, provisionally titled the **Surgical Residents Foundation Camp**. Modelled on the successful **Scottish Surgical Boot Camp** but adapted and developed by the group to reflect local needs and expertise, this simulation-rich three- to four-day course will progressively integrate technical and non-technical skills, surgeon and team wellbeing, and other essential competencies for future surgeons and the patients they serve. Together, these developments demonstrate how the experience and capacity established

through BSS are providing a foundation for a broader and increasingly responsive surgical education portfolio in Palestine.

Conclusions

"The BSS course has provided Palestinian trainees in surgical specialties with high-quality basic training, giving young surgeons the 'building blocks' for their careers while enhancing their self-confidence. In my own practice, I have seen an appreciable transition in trainees' performance before and after the course. BSS has also established a benchmark against which their performance can be evaluated and has paved the way for further training initiatives, including the planned Surgical Boot Camp."

— Dr. Omar Abdul Shafi, Local Faculty, Surgeon

What began as an internationally supported training initiative fifteen years ago has evolved into a nationally embedded and locally led component of surgical residency training in Palestine. This evolution has been enabled by sustained partnerships, continuous faculty development, and the commitment of national institutions to maintaining high standards in surgical training. The BSS experience suggests that the long-term value of clinical training lies not only in the number of professionals trained, but in whether a program leaves behind the people, institutional relationships, educational capacity, and systems needed to continue training others.

This is perhaps the program's most important legacy. As new generations of Palestinian surgeons become trainers themselves, the expertise gained can continue to be passed on within the national surgical training system. Demand for BSS continues to grow, with residency programs and hospitals seeking greater access to training and more frequent course delivery. The foundations established over the past fifteen years position Juzoor and its partners to respond to this demand while continuing to advance surgical education in Palestine.



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